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Chapter 1 by Barghavi Gopinath

Babies. Screaming, crying, wailing. The sound overwhelms the place. On the other side, children pushing, shoving, running amok. All of them seemingly 5 years old. They all have a story behind them. A story forbidden to be told to anyone. A story that will haunt them forever. A story that cannot be lost like losing your car key in the Sewers.

This place was known to them as the Area.

These children are all taught the same schedule. Wake up at 6 am prompt. Brush thoroughly for 2.5 minutes. Shower with soap and water. Stay hydrated. Breakfast should be eaten at 7:30 am, lunch at 12:10 pm, dinner at 6:00 pm, and a mid-day snack anytime between 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm. If these rules are interfered with in any way, the child gets sent to the Pit. The Pit is a dark, enclosed, circular room with an iron panel door. The walls have elongated, foot-long nails on every uncovered space. Only 5 inches of space in the middle of the Pit is uncovered, and that is where the disciplined children stand. The rest is the Caretaker's choice. It's either that or being endlessly whipped by the Caretaker himself. His name is Tommy. But he was mostly referred to as "Sir" or "Mr. Caretaker".

But this is where the story ends for 10 year old Taylor. She is the oldest of the kids. Nobody wants to adopt her due to the fact she has a fractured leg. Recently, her leg was chopped off by the Caretaker for a reason unsure of. Taylor felt a seething pain every time she placed her right leg down.

Just then, she hears a rustle on her cage

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